

カントの目に映じた日本

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How Immanuel Kant viewed Japan.

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This essay is comprised from the following sections:

Preface

1) The names of Japan 2) Guillaume Rubruquis (French friar in the 13th century) alluded to Japan
3) Marco Polo, a braggart, talked about Japan 4) The name of Polo (孛羅) found in the History of the Yuan Dynasty 5) The description of Japan's discovery by Portuguese 6) Kant began a series of open lectures on Physical Geography 7) The analysis of Kant's manuscripts "Japan" and a brief comment on them 8) The errors of Prof. Kuwaki's essay on "Kant's Japan".

Conclusion; The formation of Kant's Image of Japan.

The abstract in English.

Immanuel Kant (1724~1804), the founder of critical philosophy, was born and died in Königsberg, Germany. He was first educated as a Pietist * at Collegium Friedericianum (until 1740) and later on studied sciences, mathematics, and philosophy at the Univ. of Königsberg (1740~46). While student he was a Leibnitz-Wolffian** disciple; and was influenced by David Hume, an English empiricist. But he gradually developed his own philosophy in which he tried to determine laws and limits of human knowledge and to avoid dogmatism, skepticism and overestimation. ***

Sometime after 30 years of age, Kant decided to enter the teaching profession at the Univ. of Königsberg by writing "De igne" (i.e. on Fire) in Latin. In 1755 he took the degree of Magister Artium (M. A) through hard work and he got the post of Privat-dozent. The position did not guarantee his living, however, he was contented with honest poverty a little over 10 years. At the summer term, in 1756, he began to teach "Physischer Geographie" (i.e. Physical Geography) as well as ethics. He was not a well-off man at that time but he eked out his livelihood. He enjoyed the great name of pioneer of Physical Geography together with Prof. J. C. Gattler at Göttingen University.

Kant's public lecture on Physical Geography lasted more than 40 years until he quit teaching in 1796. His lecture attracted lots of regular and irregular students. Among the audience were found some high officials or noblemen.

Kant had 3 ways of looking at the earth objectly; the first is the mathematical observation

which regards the globe as a heavenly body without animate things and considers the size and the circumference of the earth. The second is the political observation which studies the community, human races, religion, and manners and customs. The third is the physical geographical observation which concerns the study of nature not by natural history and physics but by comparing one's experiences with something strange or curious, in other words, treats the earth with the intellectual curiosity of a traveler. He thought the third one was most difficult. Because it often attends hardwork and difficulties to gain complete and exact insight. Useful information often appears in voluminous books and there are no textbooks used at Universities.

Kant decided to give his first special lecture by preparing general notes (drafts) and later to enlarge them. He looked up reference books, bulletins and magazines to glean something curious and new. Since there were no good books to consult regarding Physical Geography, he was asked to publish his notes by publishers but he declined their proposals. Later his disciple and researcher compiled and published Kant's documents (i.e. Handschriften) by tracing the University Library or National Library in Königsberg or that of Berlin.

Prof. Helmuth von Glasenapp (1891~1963, a philosopher of comparative religion) prepared to make up for the missing notes of Asian countries in Kant's Physical Geography and had them to be published in 1944 with comment and annotation. By the end of April, in 1944, 2000 copies were printed at Kanter-Verlag in Königsberg and was scheduled to be published in 1945. However German defeat was imminent, the city of Königsberg was burned to ground due to the bombing by the Allied Forces and the Russian army. When the war ended, the city was occupied by the Russian troops. The professor escaped† from the city with a newly printed book in his suitcase to Baden-Baden, 18m. SSW of Karlsruhe, Germany. After the war he published "Kant und die Religionen des Ostens" (Holzner-Verlag, Kitzingen-Main, 1954) with amendment. The book saw for the first time the chapter on "Japan" which was not published till then.

The first Japanese scholar who translated "Japan" by Kant was Mitsuyoshi Saegusa (三枝充憲, 1923~2010, a Buddhist scholar, Assis. Prof. at Tokyo Univ. of Education). He translated it from "Das Indienbild Deutscher Denker" (K. F. Koehler Verlag, Stuttgart, 1960—Revised edition of "Kant und die Religionen des Ostens") and published "Kant's view of Japan" (i.e. 「カントの日本観」) in Risō, No. 357, Feb—1963. In 1966 he republished it in the 15th volume of the Complete Works of Kant published from the Risōsha. Thanks to him Japanese readers are able to read "Japan" in its translation.

Research shows that very few people published their research work on Kant's Japan in a bulletin. This is partly because there is no new discovery to add to the foregoing study. The name of Genyoku Kuwaki (桑木厳翼, 1874~1946, a professor of philosophy at Tokyo University) should be remembered as a herald of "Kant in Japan". Some 100 years ago he embarked on studying Kant's view on Japan based on scanty materials. He picked up the lines describing the things Japanese from Kant's *Werken*, L. Heinemann's Verlag, Leipzig, 1877, and unsuccessfully waded through other works by Voltaire, Brucker, Bayle, Montesquieu, Rousseau and Kämpfer and so on with a view to find his written sources for manuscripts. But he could not realize great results despite his industry. The wonder is that we find not only lots of misquoted pages but also some gross errors in his essay. He mistook, for example, "Ambra" (i.e. amber gris) for "amber" (E.) when he quoted it.

The present writer was deeply interested in how Kant viewed Japan by reading through Kant's "Japan" in its Japanese translation and also in the essay by Prof. Kuwaki while I was engaged in collecting materials on the Japanese reception of Immanuel Kant during the Meiji era. The research led me to examine the sources of Kant's Diktattext on Japan. Examination shows that Kant mainly used *The History of Japan* (1712) by Engelbert Kämpfer (1651~1716, a German physician and traveler) and *The travels* by Carl Peter Thunberg (1743~1828, a Swedish botanist) and possibly the reports by Jesuit priests in preparing notes for his lecture.

In regard to how Kant viewed Japan, he seems to be only an outside observer because he was not an actual resident in Japan. So he had nothing to talk about his personal experiences thereof, whereas Kämpfer and Thunberg lived in Nagasaki, Japan. Consequently parts of their descriptions are rich in vividness.

To most European people, Japan was not only a remote but unknown country. At that time Westerners were not well-informed with the state of affairs in Japan. From Kant's viewpoint, Japan seemed to be a backward nation rich in mysteriousness and exaggeration. The subtitles of "Japan" show that he looked over Japan from the perspective of cultural and natural sciences. For Kant, Japan was neither an *El Drado* (i.e. The Realms of Gold) nor an civilized nation with different looks from European nations.

* J. H. W. Stuckenberg, D. D.,: *The Life of Immanuel Kant*, Macmillan and Co., London, 1882, p.15
Kirchmann says "Kant's Erziehung war streng religiös, im Geiste des damaligen Pietismus".

(Kant's Leben und Schriften, p.1).

** Kant's Leben und Schriften by, J. H. v. Kirchmann (Immanuel Kant's sämtliche Werke. Erster Band. L. Heimman's Verlag, Leipzig, 1876) p.3

*** Webster's Biographical Dictionary, G. & C. Merriam Co., Massachusetts, 1972, p.804

**** Friedrich Paulsen: *Immanuel Kant. Sein Leben und seine Lehre*, Fr. Frommanns Verlag, Stuttgart, 1898, p.35 Paulsen says "Ein Hauptkolleg war daneben bald die" physische Geographie", die Kant als der erste in den Universitätunterricht eingeführt hat;

† Mitsuyoshi Saegusa : Kant's view of Japan (「カントの日本観」), No. 357, Risō, Feb-1963